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## **BOOK REVIEW**

Robert A. Monroe, *Ultimate Journey*

*Reviewed by Miles Pearce*

*Miles Pearce received the 1996 Monroe Institute Scholarship, a four year scholarship awarded each year to a qualifying Nelson County senior. He is currently a student at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, and is considering majoring in anthropology. However, he is open to suggestions from people who are very happy with their chosen vocations. Miles attended the GATEWAY VOYAGE® in August.*

In *Ultimate Journey*, Robert A. Monroe emphasizes two points that predicate his “Different Overview.” We are more than our physical bodies. There is continued existence after death. He goes on to say that our human life experiences serve a very important purpose, but the awareness/intelligence that is us was around long before, and will be around long after, our physical lives on this plane. Our current cultural-societal manifestation does not recognize the existence of anything outside of time and space. This limits most of us to a very small portion of what we may experience as conscious, intelligent beings. To move beyond the perceptual limits of contemporary mainstream society and formulate a solid Different Overview based on experience is the main goal that Monroe sets for the reader.

One important factor that Monroe discusses is the powerful effect our physical bodies have on us. We are limited by numerous addictions connected to our Earth Life System realities. More often than not, our “Animal Sub-Self” exercises a great deal of control over what we are able to accomplish. Our conscious mind may have lofty goals and high aspirations, but try as we may we are unable to maintain a commitment to them because we do not have the cooperation of our Animal Sub-Self. Monroe holds that the Animal Sub-Self is responsible for the filtration and dissolution of our mental brilliance (p. 72). He says that its signals taint almost every facet of human life. That idea is one that warrants further debate because there are those who say that the body is a pure vessel and that it is the frantic, uncultivated mind that distorts our intentions. Nevertheless it is extremely important to understand the whims of our biological nature and engage its cooperation. If we can do that, and thus allow ourselves access to non-physical (M) Field energies, we enter into the realm of unlimited possibilities.

Equally important (and possibly more so) are the effects of our cultural programming. From the day we are born, we are constantly exposed to a version of reality shared by almost all members of our society. From the time we are in our mother’s womb, and throughout our physical and mental development, we are told, “This is how it is, this is how the world works...” Our society heavily discounts any reports of realities outside of time and space. Any

experiences we have as a young child that are incompatible with the popular understanding of reality are strongly discounted and we are admonished not to reveal or repeat them.

There is certainly some variation in the collective interpretation of reality, but it is usually minor, especially with the advent of mass media and the extreme homogenization that has recently occurred in our society. The tendency of dominant religious and political institutions to severely punish those having a different overview hasn't helped either. By the time we reach physical maturity, most of us have a pretty rigid mentality. It is a great challenge to objectively reevaluate our cultural conditioning and thinking patterns.

According to Monroe's discoveries, our life experience on Earth is immensely valuable no matter what we do, but by exploring the realities outside of time-space, we may discover who and what we really are and maximize our life experience. The first step in this process is to develop a different overview that will allow for such explorations. At first it may be necessary to believe the descriptions of Monroe and other explorers until it is possible to turn Beliefs into personal Knowns.

After establishing his Different Overview and doing some exploration of other energy systems, Monroe came to an impasse. He did not know what he was supposed to be doing. He felt that somehow he had taken a wrong turn or missed an important element. A new direction materialized: "The prime need was to know myself without equivocation. The more I came to know myself the more I would know what I am in nonphysical expression, and the closer I would come to the reason for the path I seemed to be taking" (p. 141).

Upon coming to this conclusion Monroe spent a year delving into the makeup of his I-There (beyond physical existence). He discovered a number of "layers" that played a part in defining his I-There. The memory layer is a complete record of one's entire life. It is constantly being updated by continuous signals from the physical body. Near the memory layer he found a fear layer and an emotional layer. Apparently the I-There creates an efficient system for dealing with and categorizing these issues. Monroe concludes that we all have our own active I-There, which is constantly looking after us, and that we all have the potential to replicate his experience for ourselves. Other important factors are:

1. understanding (M) Field energies and becoming proficient with them;
2. being aware of influences (both positive and negative) and learning to pick up only what is useful;
3. releasing limiting belief systems.

The work of Robert Monroe and The Monroe Institute provides exciting opportunities for expanding human potential. The guided techniques and Hemi-Sync® technology are an easy way for people to access energies that were previously available only to those with a lot of

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